

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently amended) A method for preventing polymerization of ~~an~~ acrylic acid during a separation of the acrylic acid from an acrylic acid aqueous solution ~~comprising:~~
~~the acrylic acid aqueous solution contains~~ containing glyoxal and/or its hydrate;
hydrate
~~the separation is conducted in an azeotropic dehydration column in the presence~~
of an azeotropic ~~solvent;~~ solvent
~~the acrylic acid, the glyoxal and/or its hydrate are separated from the acrylic acid~~
~~aqueous solution and withdrawn from the bottom of the column, wherein;~~
, wherein the method comprises withdrawing glyoxal and/or its hydrate from the
bottom of the column in an amount of
50% or more of the glyoxal and/or its hydrate with respect to 100% of total
glyoxal and/or its hydrate contained in the acrylic acid aqueous solution ~~are~~
~~withdrawn from the bottom of the column.~~
2. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the
concentration of water in liquid phases at the 3rd to 6th ~~plate of~~ theoretical plates in said
azeotropic dehydration column is 0.1 mass % or more.
3. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the
concentration of acrylic acid in an aqueous phase of ~~the~~ condensate from the top of said
azeotropic dehydration column is 0.5 to 5.0 mass % and a bottom effluent withdrawn
from the bottom thereof contains 30% or more of acetic acid contained in the acrylic acid
aqueous solution fed into said azeotropic dehydration column.
4. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~an~~ said
azeotropic solvent ~~having~~ has a solubility in water of 0.5 mass % or less at room
temperature ~~is used.~~

5. (Original) The method according to claim 4, wherein said azeotropic solvent is an aliphatic hydrocarbon having a carbon number of 7 or 8 or an aromatic hydrocarbon having a carbon number of 7 or 8.

6. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the ~~top~~ temperature at the top of said azeotropic dehydration column is 40 to 50°C and the ~~bottom~~-temperature at the bottom thereof is 90 to 110°C.

Amendments to the Abstract

Kindly amend the Abstract as set fort on the attached separate sheet.